

February 22, 2010

Open letter from *Children First* to the Chairman of the Renfrew County District School Board, Roy Reiche

Re: Future of Morison School

We wrote to you *four weeks ago* and have not received a reply, or even the courtesy of an acknowledgement.

In the interest of genuine transparency, we have three requests:

1. Allow public access to the written sheets handed out at the three consultation meetings in Deep River.
2. Provide separate written reports of the three consultation meetings.
3. Explain why your staff concluded that Option 1 (close the Morison site) was favoured, whereas our public opinion survey resulted in Option 1 being rejected by more than 90% of the respondents – 99 votes out of 108; and even if the 29 votes of Morison parents were subtracted from the total, Option 1 would still be rejected by 88% of the respondents.

There is a clear implication that although Board staff sought input from the public, they did not trust the public to make a wise decision, and therefore did not ask for a written preference at the consultation meetings. Option 1 may be in the best interests of Morison students, but according to our public opinion survey, it may not be; and in addition, Option 2 may not cost as much as Option 1. Let's find out!

It should be noted that the October 26th Action Report submitted by Board staff stated that: "*Given the criteria on which the grant is provided, two options were to be considered*". On the basis of that statement, we assumed that the two options were equally viable; and we also assumed that the citizens of Deep River would have significant influence on the choice to be made, by participating in a consultation process that provided an adequate explanation of how those options would affect the community.

Finally, our letter isn't the only one to be ignored. I am aware of letters from the Morison School Council, Anne Davies and Alex Frew which were never answered.

We look forward to your reply,

John Hilborn for Children First

